

St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth

Newsletter: June 2020



Also online at: www.stbrandon.org.uk/newsletter



Parochial Church Council

Priest in Charge	Rev'd Anna Brooker (3780578) or rector@stbrandon.org.uk or anna.brooker@durham.ac.uk	
Associate Minister	Rev'd. Alison Hobbs (3789670) alison@brancepethcastle.org.uk	
Curate	Revd Sabine Tenge-Heslop (01388 730855) rev.sabine@durham.anglican.org	
Lay Reader	Geoff Moore – co-opted member of P.C.C. (3735674)	
Church Wardens:	Hester Higton	(5974675)
	James Morgan	(4476520)
Secretary	Carole Beeby	(3847431), (07592 975002)
Treasurer	Mike Higton	(5974675)
Deanery Synod	Robert Scott-Biggs (3735907).	
	David Eltringham	(01388 746058)
	John Roberts	(01388 748287)
Other members:-		
	Jayne Cook	(01388 731417) Steve Hodgson (3780289)
	Peter Cook	(01388 731417) Sue Morgan (3781172)
	Tom Hobbs	(07857437860) Isabel Rae (9039145)
	Jean Hodgson	(3780289)
Pastoral Assistant	Deborah Hodge (01388 745455)	
Prayer Team	Deborah Hodge (01388 745455), Alison Hobbs (378 9670), Alison Moore (373 5674), Myrleen Stewart (378 0862).	
Sunday School	Martin Peacock (07503242074)	
Messy Church	Liz Thomas (3784465)	
Organist	Richard Hird	
Village Choir	Jean Merrington (3780952)	
Sacristans	Carol Beeby (3847431), Deborah Hodge (01388 745455), Jean Hodgson (3780289), Valeria Dietz.	
Safeguarding Officer	Geoff Moore (3735674)	
Flower Guild	Lynne Hastie (3781871)	
Churchyard	Edward Staines (3780858)	
Youth Club	Geoff Moore (3735674), Martin Peacock (07503242074)	
Worship Team	Hester Higton, Rev'd Alison Hobbs, Rev'd Fiona Eltringham, Deborah Hodge, Jean Hodgson, Jean Merrington, Geoff Moore, Sue Morgan.	
SMD Team:	Hester Higton, Alison Hobbs, Alison Moore, Martin Peacock.	
Fabric:	James Morgan (chair), Peter Cook, Alison Hobbs, Tom Hobbs, Steve Hodgson, Geoff Knott, John Roberts, Robert Scott-Biggs, Edward Staines.	
Website	www.stbrandon.org.uk	

July /August Newsletter entries – no later than **June 18th**

Please send to Sue Morgan – sueatpeppermires@gmail.com

Dear friends,

Malcolm Guite (pronounced Gite with a hard g), a contemporary Christian poet, has suggested that in these strange and worrying times we are held in a still space between ‘before all this happened’ and ‘when this is all over’ – a space between memory and hope. He was writing a few weeks ago, probably before the longer-term implications of the pandemic had become clearer, so that we are less sure now what ‘when this is all over’ might mean, and if and when it might occur. (A useful barometer might be when our news has more on Brexit than it does on the virus!) Nonetheless, it is perhaps a helpful way of thinking about this ‘in between’ time.

Memory can take us back to times and things that we cannot currently enjoy – people, places, particularities of our lives. It reminds us, perhaps in salutary fashion, how easily we took so many things for granted. For some of us, a memory of receiving the sacrament of communion – an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual truth – is a particularly poignant and possibly painful memory. Even if we can ‘feed on him in our hearts’, we still feel unfed.

There is, of course, a lot of talk about hope at present: hope that the R number might come down and remain down everywhere; hope that the easing of lockdown restrictions might continue; hope that the economic harm is not too great; hope that mental health is not too damaged and can be restored; hope that we might learn from this experience and so create a sustainable and more equal world. Hope is, of course, future-oriented, although it has implications for what we do now in order to help to realise those hopes.

But perhaps, living in this enforced manner between memory and hope is a good place to be if it can help us to focus more on the present. Malcolm Guite ended his piece by quoting a verse from a Coleridge poem.¹ It feels appropriate, in these times, at least to try to:

employ

Each faculty of sense, and keep the heart
Awake to Love and Beauty! and sometimes
‘Tis well to be bereft of promis’d good,
That we may lift the soul, and contemplate
With lively joy the joys we cannot share.

With my best wishes

Geoff Moore

¹ ‘This Lime-tree Bower my Prison’

St Brandon's response to changes imposed by the Covid- 19 situation

If you have not heard from us and would like to be involved in our Zoom services please send an email to hesterhigton@phonecoop.coop or call Hester or Mike on 0191 597 4675. Details are also posted on the church website at stbrandon.org.uk.

St Brandon's May 2020 – Services and readings

All services will be held online via Zoom and everyone is welcome.

In addition to the services below, each day Monday - Friday Morning Prayer is shared online at 8.15am and there is a midday Eucharist from Brancepeth Castle at 12noon.

*Meeting invitations are sent via NAVIGATOR, St Brandon's email link.
Please phone or email for further details.*

Thursday 4th June, Evening Prayer 7.30pm

7th June, Trinity Parish Eucharist – 10.15

Readings: First:	Evelyn Aitken	Isaiah 40: 12-17, 27-end
Gospel:	Janette Foxe	Matthew 28: 16-20
	Edward Staines	Intercessions

Thurs 11th June, *Corpus Christi and St Barnabas* Evening Prayer 7.30pm

14th June, 1st after Trinity Parish Eucharist – 10.15

Readings: First:	Anne Allen	Romans 5: 1-8
Gospel:	Carys Funnell	Matthew 9: 35 - 10: 8
	Richard Gooding	Intercessions

Thurs 18th June, Evening Prayer 7.30pm

Sun 21st June, 2nd after Trinity Parish Eucharist – 10.15

Readings: First:	Amy Gooding	Romans 6: 1b-11
Gospel:	David Eltringham	Matthew 10: 24-39
	Geoff Moore	Intercessions

Messy Church 4pm: Theme: Treasure!

Thurs 25th June, Evening Prayer 7.30pm

Sun 28th June, 3rd after Trinity Parish Eucharist – 10.15

Readings: First:	Jean Hodgson	Romans 6: 12-end
Gospel:	Nick Brooker	Matthew 10: 40-end
	Sally Scott-Biggs	Intercessions

Thurs 2nd July, Evening Prayer 7.30pm

Sun 5th July, 4th after Trinity Parish Eucharist – 10.15

Readings: First:	Richard Gooding	Romans 6: 12-end
Gospel:	Jean Merrington	Matthew 10: 40-end
	Ulrike Hobbs	Intercessions

Do you know anyone who, for any reason, would appreciate a prayer or a friendly chat?

Please tell Deborah Hodge, Authorised Pastoral Assistant, and she will get in touch. 01388 745455

Funerals

Since lockdown, there have been a number of funerals for people from Brancepeth and St Brandon's. In each case, we plan to hold a memorial service in church at a later date.

Brian Harold Bransden died 2nd March 2020, aged 93.

Burial in the new churchyard on 25th March 2020.

Joyce Baines died 17th April 2020, aged 89

Cremation at Durham, 4th May 2020

Godfrey Fisher Young died 14th May 2020, aged 82

Cremation at Durham, 28th May 2020

PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING DIARY June 2020

You are invited to use this diary to share in the prayers offered daily

**‘the heart that broke for all the broken-hearted’
(from ‘Ascension’ by Malcolm Guite)**

- 1 In the 3rd month of lockdown, with so many losses, we pray for ‘all the broken-hearted’
- 2 Pray for those grieving the death of a loved one
- 3 Oakenshaw Road
- 4 Pray for our children and young people, sad at the loss of being out and with friends
- 5 **Wooley Grange**, Springwell Farm, **High Wooley**, Weather Hill, **South Brandon** Farm and Brawns Den
- 6 Goodwell Lea

7 Trinity Sunday May we be open to God – as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer

- 8 Quarry Hill and cottages, Morley Farm, Littlewhites Farm and Goodwell Field
- 9 For musicians, actors and performers in the loss of livelihood
- 10 The Rectory, Rectory Cottages, Bridleway, Constable Meadows, Hoppy Acres and Thornberry Garth
- 11 **Barnabas, the apostle known as the ‘encourager’.** May we encourage someone today.
- 12 Whitworth Lane and Black House
- 13 The Castle and Lodge

14 Trinity 1 God the Creator Thanks for the many creative initiatives in lockdown

- 15 For workers of all kinds in the ongoing demands of working with C19 constraints
- 16 Village North, Station House and Cottages
- 17 Foxes Row, Russell Close and North Field View
- 18 For households in the loss of freedom, particularly where violence is rife and fear is constant
- 19 Bridge Road and Tanglewood
- 20 **Corpus Christi, (the body of Christ)** For those feeling the loss of taking communion

21 Trinity 2 God the Redeemer Thanks for the reality of hope in despair

- 22 The Village South
- 23 For the NE universities and colleges with the loss of students, income and future plans
- 24 **Birth of John the Baptist** For new born babies, and new parents sad at the separation from family

- 25 Durham Road and the Forge
26 Park Lodge, Garden House, Nursery House, East Bothy, Scription Lodge, Scription Farm
27 Peppermires, Culmaran Tudhoe Lodge, Nafferton Farm, Holywell and East Parks

28 Trinity 3 God the Sustainer Thanks for the resources for the long haul

29 **Peter and Paul** For all who teach and preach, helping us on our faith journey

30 Stockley Grove

For July entries contact Myrleen Stewart 0191 378 0862

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**VE Day 2020 – under Covid-19
Lockdown.**

Places in my life.

Shrapnel painted in the window frame, and the
story told.

Factories burning

I cannot hear the bombs falling, or the screams

Near where I grew up, one mast still stands. I
think the last.

The company where my parents worked.

The electronic systems were effective; just
enough.

Flying off to Europe, high in the blue sky.
Comfortable aircraft, with a G&T.
Sun veiled in cloud, no spitting fire, no sudden
agony, no death today

Disused airfield on a misty, eerie afternoon.
An engine running, stuttering
Nothing to try to land with damaged wings and
gear.

Out on the North Pier; out into the grey, uneasy
sea.

Tide-predicted ships,
Sunk with fierce explosions in the night
And who lies with them?

A concrete pillbox, much neglected now
Near a happy pub, children on the beach.
Horrors that didn't happen.

Here.

Take a walk in the sand dunes, near my brother's
house

Concrete landing craft, built for practice.

Young men running to shoot and be shot at,
young men struggling in the water, young men
dying.

Near my other brother's house

A whole field full of more young men.

Their allied-flag flies bold and brave and sad.

They came to help

Who do we and they help now?

Other people caused it.

In places far away, they were not us.

We can always blame 'them', the others.

All the differences, all the divisions, all the "ism's"

Poverty and exploitation, daily struggles not
admitted.

Mistakes were made, but how could they have
seen?

With pride and sorrow,
(and false pride and selfishness)
we think we care.

But words are easy, aren't they?
And have we learned?

And now?

Caroline Middleditch
Friday, 8th May 2020

Brancepeth Youth Club

June - July 2020

We're meeting weekly by Zoom for the time being, 6pm on Sundays. All young people in the Village (and beyond, and their friends) are warmly welcome. The age range is from 11 to 17 years inclusive.

If you haven't yet joined one of the Zoom meetings and would like to, then please phone or email Geoff for details.

As and when the situation changes and we can start to meet in the Village Hall again, we'll be in touch. It would be great if we could have our annual BBQ on 12th July – the last meeting before the summer!

Leaders

Geoff Moore 373 5674 durmoores@btinternet.com

Martin Peacock 07503 242074

Jonny Dobson, Sabine Tenge-Heslop, Tom Hobbs and Alison Hobbs will also be helping to lead.

St. Brandon's Church – Grass Cutting Rota 2020

Dear all,

The continuing guidance from the police to the church is that the church should not arrange for the church grass to be mowed until the restrictions are eased. The rota for the next few weeks is included below in case there is any easing in the restrictions as the month progresses before the next newsletter is published.

24th May – 6th June Steve Hodgson Geoff Harrison

7th June - 20th June Tom Hobbs Richard Hobbs

21st June – 4th July Simon Elliot David Jackson

Garden Club.

It is with regret that we have decided to cancel the Walkabout, 3 July, and Annual Show 12 September. The sunflowers being grown by the young gardeners will be judged where they have been grown. Just send Edward Staines the address detail. edward.staines@icloud.com

Book Club

The next meeting is arranged for the 19th June and the book to read is:

'A history of Britain in 21 Women' by Jenni Murray. If possible we meet at Josie Armstrong's at Stockley Farm – if not we're meeting by 'Zoom' at 7.30pm.

The July book is The Dutch House by Ann Patchett. 31st July at Sue Morgan's house at Peppermires – or on Zoom

All welcome.

Val Gibbons.

Gillian Smellie (GS) interviewed by Sabine Heslop (SH)

SH: How long have you been living in Brancepeth?

GS: Twenty years. We came down from Glasgow, because Stuart found a nine-month job at Bishop Auckland - and then the job became permanent, so we stayed in the area!

SH: What do you like in Brancepeth?

GS: The community: there are so many lovely people living here, with many resources in terms of skills and time, and there is so much going on! And also the castle, which is lived in! We almost take it for granted, but not every village has such a castle. I like the feel of living in the middle of nowhere while in 15 minutes, I can get to Durham railway station, and catch a train to Scotland or London to visit my family.

SH: What did you do in your professional life?

GS: Initially, I was involved with theatre, doing everything from management to acting. When I left the theatre I worked in overseas development for Sight Savers and then economic development in Scotland and the North East.

SH: When did you first get involved with the church in Brancepeth?

GS: That was shortly after we had moved here, when I turned up in church with three small children. Together with Liz, we started doing the Sunday School: We had great times with 15-20 children coming in those days! Also, we were one of the first churches in the North East to start a Messy Church, of which I was an active member until last year.

SH: Amazing – what a long time of super engagement! Now tell me about ‘The Brancepeth Bugle’: How did this come to pass?

GS: When the Corona crisis came into view, I rang Anna Brooker and Dave Armstrong to find out how I could help, for example with errands for people and shopping. They had the idea of issuing an update for the village, so people would still feel connected, knew what was going on, and got some practical advice in terms of telephone numbers or suggestions of things to do in these strange times of isolation. They asked me whether I could do it – and I agreed.

SH: What a very valuable resource! How is it circulated?

GS: We were lucky that the first issue could go out as a print, but now it is issued online. Just send me an E-mail to gillian@smellie.com, and I will add you to the list of recipients. We have to do it this way to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

SH: I see. My last question: What are your hopes for Brancepeth?

GS: It is lovely that the village is starting to have more young families with children and I hope that continues! Apart from that, I hope we can go on as a community with what we are doing, since we do it so well!

SH: Indeed! God bless you for all your work!



Messy Church online 4pm Sunday 21st June.

Theme: *Treasure!*

The session will be held via Zoom and advertised in the Navigator
and on the church Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/StBrandons/>

From the Parish Council

Despite the current problems, the Parish Council are meeting in a virtual way. Even with the slow down that the virus has brought to all things, we're progressing our improvements and upgrades. If you've a problem that you want to share with the Parish Council you can still get in touch via the clerk on the website. Don't forget that Durham County Council's website has a helpline where problems can be logged on line, they are being responsive and working through the pandemic.

We're progressing getting the field mown and the old hay bales disposed of. To do that the gate in from the A690 needs fixing and making safe. Hopefully by the time you read this it will have all been sorted.

Also the Parish Council would like to thank those who have adopted a tub; they've looked really bright and have given the village some colour through the spring showing the effort that has been put into them. We're looking forward to seeing them planted out with summer bedding plants.

Dave Armstrong (Chair

Results of the Brancepeth Quiz for under 18 year olds.

I'm grateful to all those who took the trouble to fill in the answers to the quiz and the results are as follows:

1st **Dom Stephenson** Prize £10

2nd equal **Elsie Thomas and Timon Basu** Prize £8 each

3rd equal **Bridget Higton and Louis Waiting** Prize £5 each

The quiz invited contestants to make suggestions for improving life in Brancepeth and the following answers deserve to be more widely known in the village. One contestant asked for a new traffic sign on the main road, saying *"Slow: Children Crossing"* to enable young people to cross more safely and *"then my parents might let me cross on my own."* Another asked for a Youth Committee to be established, with a chair elected by the children to feed suggestions from them to the Brancepeth Community Association and *"make sure all suggestions are considered."* A third asked for more activities especially aimed at young people eg a cycling club and more activities on the village green. A plea was also made for a better bus shelter from which you could see the bus coming.

When asked what is the best aspect of living in Brancepeth, the answers were: the community spirit, the calmness, the presence of friends, the Christmas Show, the film club, the choir, the golf club, and one even mentioned the village quiz.

My thanks to **Richard Jackson** for checking my homework and for contributing to the prize money.

Frank Coffield

24 May 2020

Help Help Help

In last month's Newsletter I talked about what we could not do to help charities that we usually support. But on reflection I should have written more about what we **can** do.

I have heard and read about how much charities are losing at the moment, so I thought I might prompt you to think about giving financially to one or some of the charities. Here are some websites to spur you on.

www.trusselltrust.org.uk (that's for the foodbank we support normally)

www.refuge.org.uk (for women's' refuges)

www.childrenssociety.org.uk

Fiona Eltringham

Remembering those known to us who have died recently

In these difficult times when even funerals have to be very private affairs we know many people in the village will want to remember and say farewell to friends and neighbours. We bring you three tributes to those we have known and loved.

Joyce Baines

Joyce and Arthur have been faithful members of the church in Brancepeth for many years

Joyce was born in Wheatley Hill, adopted as a baby by her aunt because her mother died. Although she didn't discover this for many years, as was the way in those days, Joyce had a happy and secure childhood with her father's sister, in a strict Methodist family.

She and Arthur met in Durham and were married at Wheatley Hill Methodist Chapel in 1952. They began married life in Sherburn, then moved with Arthur's job to Norwich and Solihull before coming back to Durham in 1974. Meanwhile, they were blessed with two daughters, Sandra in 1955 and Karen in 1963.

Joyce was a great homemaker and mum, whilst also enjoying the part-time work she did, especially as a silver service waitress in Solihull and at the newly opened Greggs in Brandon, where she made many friends.

Joyce was hardworking and house-proud, never sat down really, always on the go. She was a devoted grandmother to Joanna, William and Emily. While Sandra and Colin were in Germany, she would act as escort to Joanna in her travels to and fro during the school holiday.

Joyce and Arthur loved their visits to Germany too.

In latter years, Arthur cared for Joyce with great devotion and she died peacefully at home on 17th April.

May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Taken from the address at Durham Crematorium on Monday 4th May 2020

Godfrey Young

Godfrey Fischer Young, born 17.2.1938 and died 14.5.2020. He was born in Sunderland where he practiced as a Vet until his retirement in 1996. He was a King's Scholar at Durham School and trained at Dick Vet, Edinburgh where he was one of the youngest in his year. Following retirement he left Pitlington where he had lived from the time of his first marriage to move to live at High Wooley with Alison who became his second wife in 1999. He took part in Brancepeth social activities with Alison including the progressive supper, the Garden Club and the Walk About, Quiz nights and as a supporter of the Garden Club Shows amongst other things. He leaves, Alison, two sons Edward and Nigel to Dinah, his first wife, and two grandchildren, Zachary and Matilda.

For some time Alison and Godfrey had planned to down size into the village, Alison has found somewhere and is keen to sell the house at High Wooley.

– Preferably to buyers with an interest in taking on the beautiful garden.

Please pass on this information if you think you know of anyone.

Revd. Canon Ralph Mayland VRD* - 1927 to 2020

Ralph was born in Leeds and at 18 had his military service deferred to enter Teacher Training College at Scarborough. In 1946 he joined the Royal Navy where he rose to the rank of Lieutenant Commander. When he left the Navy he went on to teach in London.

In 1957 he began training for ordination and it was during this time he met and married Jean. He was ordained aged 32 in 1959. Ralph was made a Deacon and curate of St. Mary at Lambeth in 1959.

From April 1962-January 1968 Ralph became Priest in Charge at Manton, Worksop, where he was involved in building a new church. In 1967 Ralph and Jean welcomed the arrival of baby Sarah Joy.

In 1968 he joined the staff of the Sheffield Industrial Mission and became Vicar of St. Margaret's Brightside, where he was Chaplain to three steel works as well as chaplain to the Engineering Industry Training Board for Apprentices.

From 1972 -1979 he was Vicar of St. Mary's Parish and Priory Church, Ecclesfield and became Chaplain to the Master Cutler and Cutler's Company in 1979-80. During this time they welcomed their second daughter Alexandra May and Jean became the first female licenced lay-reader in Sheffield in 1974. Ralph strongly supported Jean's campaigning for the cause of women in the church.

Ralph became Canon Treasurer of York Minster in 1982 where he helped oversee a huge project to restore the South Transept after the fire. At this time he also became Honorary Chaplain to H.M.S. York.

Ralph retired from full-time ministry in 1994 and it was then he became a non-stipendiary minister as Priest in Charge at Brancepeth from 1994- 96. After leaving Brancepeth Ralph and Jean moved to Barmston on the East Coast of Yorkshire and then finally to Hexham. They celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary last year from their respective Care Homes. Ralph died peacefully in hospital on April 29th aged 93. May he rest in peace.

Book review:

SAYING YES TO LIFE

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2020

by RUTH VALERIO

(From the Curate Sabine; quotes from the book in italics)

Really? Talking about a Lent book in June?

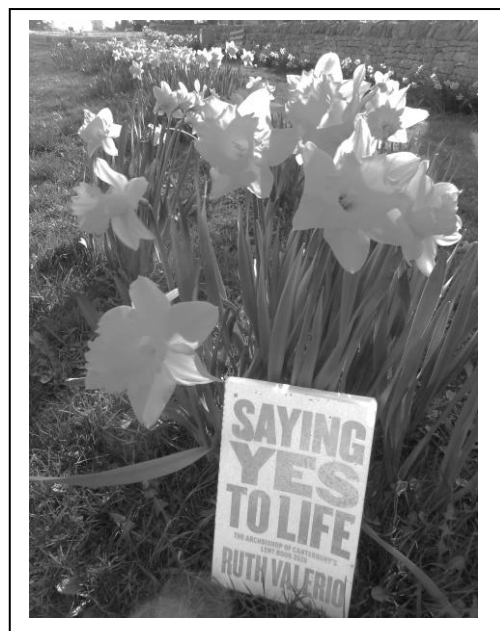
YES! Time is pressing on us as for a (hopefully short) time, the world has been changed so much by a pandemic, but will change very soon forever by the greatest ever challenge to the future of humanity: climate change.

The pandemic is on our doorstep, and because of that, we readily agreed within a few days to an unprecedented change of our life styles. Why, therefore is it so hard to change our life style for the sake of the whole Earth? Without all the life-support systems on the planet being in a healthy balance, big areas of our world will become uninhabitable in just a few decades, millions of people and animals will die. Sadly, this does not seem to affect us Europeans too much. In his foreword to this book, Archbishop Justin Welby quoted a primate from Fiji, who said: *"For you Europeans, climate change is a problem for the future. For us, it is a problem of everyday survival."*

We Europeans have not yet properly registered what is happening, and this is why a book like this is utterly relevant, any time of the year. Reflection and repentance about human strife and sin are a constant necessity, not just in Lent.

The less religious inclined reader will be tempted to switch off at this point, but I would urge all to hold on a bit: it is true that this book is primarily aimed at Christians; however, it is a very rewarding and easily accessible read for anyone with an open mind, who is grappling with fundamental issues of our time. Even if you find it hard to believe in a Creator, surely, you must wonder at times how you can make sense of all the things happening around you?!

Ruth Valerio starts her book with an age old Mesopotamian creation poem, the *Enuma Elish* (from c. 1800 BC), and as a Christian reader, one wonders at first whether she has lost her biblical rooting? Far from it: Ruth Valerio has a great talent to weave together tales and facts from past and present, so that the reader gets a deeper understanding of how interconnected everything is.



Right at the beginning, like me, you might have thought the title 'Saying YES to Life' is a no-brainer: Who would say NO? Think twice: often, we assume that we know things, and on a certain level, we do, but there are deeper levels. Time and again, we understand things in our minds, but fail to really grasp them in our hearts and souls.

For me, this is the greatest strength of the book: Ruth Valerio gets past our smug self-defences by helping us to listen properly to the voices of people in past and present. Biblical prophets stand beside Cherokee Indians, Celtic prayer beside NASA scientists, Archbishop Desmond Tutu beside Indian Hindus, tree-planting Quechua families beside Western theologians, poets beside farmers, foresters beside screaming trees, unemployed women beside artists, and all their voices unite in a cry for recognition: We have only this one planet, it is our life, and it is **sacred**!

The non-Christian reader might cringe now, but the word 'sacred' means: We need to understand our position on the planet, and we must judge our powers rightly. We cannot create life, we are not even able to revive a small life like a butterfly or a little rabbit we have accidentally killed on the road – only life can bring forth life. For the Christian reader, the first verse of Genesis sets the scene for all that is to come: *'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.'* The creating Spirit of God is constantly in all things, which does not mean that creation and God are the same, but that they are very close (panentheism): *'God is in all, suffusing his whole creation with his being, and all is in God. God is in everything, but not everything is God. Thus the natural world is not divine, but it is sacred.'* In the words of the Tanzanian scientist Andrew Kyomo: *'by not protecting forests ... we will be destroying the face of God whom we claim to love'.*

I thought it was so very apt to write a Lent book on the Days of Creation, while the world is in turmoil, and our human estrangement from our origin causes such hardship and misery. Ruth Valerio writes: *'..., though we say that 'we believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth', we too often leave that statement behind and forget that God as creator is the foundation for all our other beliefs. God as creator is also the foundation of what we do.'* Ruth Valerio points out that *'westernized Christianity traditionally struggles to hold these two concepts ... of salvation and creation together.'* Christian theology has been fatally influenced by pagan Platonic dualistic thinking, separating concepts that were meant to be one by the Creator: *'body and spirit, earth and heaven, natural and spiritual ... it exalts the latter and denigrates the former, so that nature/creation is held to be inferior to the 'supernatural' realm ... Western thinking has demystified nature and included it in the sphere of the secular.'* In Genesis 1, God declares that **all** he made was 'good' – so how can we humans ignore this? *'Do we perceive the wider world primarily as a resource for us to use as we wish, or do we regard it primarily as something that God loves and is precious to him?'*

It is this mix of biblical reflection, scientific evidence, practical action and other contemporary application, that guides the reader on a path of thought-provoking, deep reflection. And the best bit: it does not end there. The more pessimistic reader could easily think that we are all doomed, but no, this book is about hope! The hope that all people, and especially we Christians, remember that the earth is sacred, and act accordingly.

There is so much each one of us could do, wherever we are, and the book gives plenty links to books, organisations, and internet sites to *'wake the sleeping giant of the church'* and *'the*

'sleeper inside ourselves'. Ruth Valerio herself is Influencing Director at Tearfund, which is based on Pray, Act, Give.

To finish with the words of Archbishop Justin: 'As people of faith, we don't just state our beliefs – we live them out. One belief is that we find purpose and joy in loving our neighbours. Another is that we are charged by our creator with taking good care of his creation.'

Ruth Valerio calls it: 'Resurrection churches, resurrection lives. This is the calling that is on us as we look at all that God has made and say yes to life.' Let's go for it!

Postscript:

My husband Bill and I for example have discovered the ministry of litter picking. Due to the lockdown, most of normal leisure time activities are on hold, but we are allowed out once a day for exercise. So we don our high-vis vests, grab the litter pickers and the blue bags kindly provided by Durham County Council, put on gloves, and go along all roads in our neighbourhood – blissfully quiet these days! So far, we have collected around 80 bags of litter, filled two recycling-bins with aluminium cans, collected over a dozen crates of glass bottles, and reported several fly-tips, which were swiftly removed by the County Council. For me personally, most of the time humming Graham Kendrick's 'Servant King', this is a sacramental and meditative activity. Try it – you will find it fills you with an incredible feeling of satisfaction and joy! There is enough litter for all ...

Photos

Front cover ©Mike Higton– The view of the church from the Golf Course taken while it was opened to members of the village for their daily exercise.

Inside front cover © Luke Winterbourne – Blossom time in the churchyard.

Back cover © Mike Higton – Tulips at the church door; intended for the Staines' wedding – sadly postponed.

Inside back cover © Geoff Knott – Welcoming baby Kira.

www.stbrandon.org.uk/newsletter

July/August newsletter entries no later than 18th June

Please send to Sue Morgan at sueatpeppermires@gmail.com

Brancepeth Community Association - Management Committee

Peter Aitken	<i>Chairman</i>	Ian Stoker	
Martyn Jones	<i>Vice chairman</i>	Jean Merrington	<i>Choir & Church</i>
Jo Dalton	<i>Secretary (& Website)</i>	Geraldine Jennings	<i>Bookings & Garden Club</i>
Margot Harrison	<i>Treasurer</i>	Joan Taylor	<i>Subscription, Wednesday</i>
Josie Armstrong	<i>Social Secretary</i>		<i>Coffee & Cinema Club</i>
Anna Brooker	<i>Church Representative</i>		

<http://brancepethcommunityassociation.btck.co.uk/> Tel: 0191 3783952

Parish Activities

Chairman B.C.A.	Peter Aitken, The Copse, Foxes Row (3789908)
Secretary	Jo Dalton, 1 Rectory Cottages (3780771)
Treasurer	Margot Harrison, Downsgarth (3784813)
Membership	Joan Taylor, 5 The Village (3783630)
Hall Bookings	Geraldine Jennings, 6 Goodwell Lea (3781583)
Archives & History	Vivienne Lowe, 17 The Village (3780974)
Badminton	Peter Hodge, (01388 745455)
Brancepeth Allotment & Leisure Gardeners' Club	Sue Morgan, Carole Reed & Liz Burdess baacommittee3@gmail.com
Book Club	Val Gibbons (3784200)
Choir	Jean Merrington (3780952)
Drama	Martin Peacock (07503242074)
Flower Guild	Jessie Brown (3782748)
Garden Club	Barry Dickinson (3782398)
Snooker Bookings	Geraldine Jennings (3781583)
Wednesday Coffee	Joan Taylor (3783630)
Yoga	Lynne Hastie (3781871)
Youth Club	Geoff Moore (3735674)

Parish Council

Chairperson	Dave Armstrong – chair (07843 343846) James Dalton – vice chair (3780771) Christine Jones (3789297) Jessie Brown (3782748) Michael Lowe (3780974) Sheila Chapman (3784408) Ian Stoker (3784986)
Parish Clerk	Geoff Smith 07986197346
County Councillors:	olwyn.gunn@durham.gov.uk fraser.tinsley@durham.gov.uk

www.brancepeth-parish-council.org



First Cuddles!

Geoff and Alun Knott with baby Kira Jasmine.

Social history in the making as the parents and grandparents have to socially isolate or adopt protective face masks in the first weeks of Kira's life

And proud granny Carolyn enjoying her first cuddles too!

Congratulations to Alun and Oksana; their first baby and a first grandchild for Geoff and Carolyn.



